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 LR 180

that is warranted and one that makes sense at this time. Let me first go over the main provisions of the green copy of this bill, and they are these. There are three main provisions. And you'll hear this repeated, hopefully, throughout the introduction here. First, each Class I school district in Nebraska would become part of one or more K-12 districts, beginning with the 2005-2006 school year. Second, Class I school boards would be given options as to how Class I property would be assigned to K-12 districts. Third, and this is very important, there would be no requirement to close schools. Decisions about maintaining attendance centers would be left to the locally elected K-12 boards, except there would be provisions to maintain attendance centers that serve 15 or more resident students and are located ten or more miles from the nearest elementary school. I'll give you more details on these provisions as we go. But I wanted to stress these three main provisions because they have been a part of the proposal since the beginning, and they remain a part even after the committee amendment. I'll provide some background information for you. First, this bill is an outgrowth of the Legislature's examination of government in Nebraska, following a difficult time and many difficult decisions. We have cut programs and raised taxes, and maybe we're not finished yet. LB 407, from last session, posed this question: Are there ways we can deliver critically important government services more efficiently and effectively? LR 180 directed the Education Committee to study the organizational structure of elementary and secondary education in Nebraska, and develop a proposal to define...refine this structure, excuse me, to support the efficient and effective delivery of education now and into the future. My view is that LB 1048 is responsive to the LR 180 directive. LB 1048 is decisive, but it is not extreme. It results in a more efficient structure, as well as better governance. It is consistent with our tradition of local control. It helps achieve our aims of quality and equity in education. I want to give you a bit of background, if I might, on the current structure, as well, of our school system. Some of you may not have reason to be familiar. We're talking here about Class I school districts. We have Classes I through VI. Class I is elementary only. Some of them go as far as grade eight. Most of them, I would say, don't go quite that far. They're K